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Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY TAIPEI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE IMMEDIATE EOEU
CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O N F ID E N T I A L PEKING 1863

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PFOR CH
SUBJECT: DEATH OF MAO TSE-TUNG: THE SEPTEMBER 18 MASS MEMORIAL MEETING (PART II)

REF: PEKING 1862

1. THERE FOLLOW SOME FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON THE MILLION PERSON MASS MEMORIAL MEETING HELD IN PEKING SEPTEMBER 18.

2. PREPARATIONS FOR THE RALLY HAD GONE ON THROUGHOUT THE PREVIOUS NIGHT. BY 0600 HOURS ON SEPTEMBER 18, MOTOR CONVOYS AND UNITS WALKING AND DOUBLE-TIMING IN COLUMNS FOUR ABREAST HAD BEGUN TO CONVERAGE ON ASSEMBLY POINTS. THE PEKING HOTEL, ONLY A SHORT DISTANCE FROM THE SQUARE, WAS SEALED OFF AT 0900 HOURS (INTENT TO DO THIS HAD BEEN COMMUNICATED THE PRECEDING AFTERNOON BY THE PROTOCOL DEPARTMENT). AT 1000 HOURS THE FIRST UNITS TOOK UP THEIR ASSIGNED PLACED IN TIENANMEN SQUARE; ALONG CHANG AN STREET TO THE EAST AND WEST HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS BEGAN TO MASS. AT THE CHINA INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL SERVICE BUILDING ACROSS CHANG AN STREET FROM THE PEKING
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HOTEL, THE PERMANENT OUTDOOR PLACARD INSCRIBED "BOUNDLESS LONGEV-

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ITY TO CHAIRMAN MAO" HAD BEEN
DISMANTLED OVERNIGHT AND ITS COMPANION PLACARD "LONG LIFE TO CHAIR-
MAN MAO" WAS MOVED INTO THE BACKGROUND SO THAT IT WAS NO LONGER VISI-
BLE FROM THE STREET; REMAINING IN THE MOST PROMINENT POSITION WAS
THE THIRD PLACARD READING "LONG LIVE THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY."
(AT 2000 HOURS THE LAST CHARACTERS IN THE PEKING HOTEL'S BIG OUT-
DOOR "LONG LIVE CHAIRMAN MAO" WERE BEING LOWERED TO THE GROUND.)

3. PEKING TELEVISION COVERAGE OF THE MEMORIAL CEREMONY BEGAN AT
1450 HOURS WITH SHOTS OF TIENANMEN AND THE NATIONAL FLAG AT
HALF-MAST. THE CAMERA SUCCESSIVELY CUT TO THE NEWLY-CONSTRU-
CTED ROSTRUM, THE WREATHS SENT BY PARTY AND STATE LEADERS, THE ONE
MILLION PARTICIPANTS (POSSIBLE ONE-TENTH WERE UNIFORMED PLA) STAND
IN RANKS WITHIN THEIR DEMARCATED SECTORS, AND THE TWO MASSIVE BLACK-
AND-WHITE MEMORIAL INSCRIPTIONS WHICH DOMINATED THE SCENE ("ETERNAL
GLORY TO OUR GREAT LEADER AND TEACHER CHAIRMAN MAO" AND "CARRY OUT
THE CAUSE LEFT BEHIND BY CHAIRMAN MAO, CARRY THOUGH TO THE END THE
PROLETARIAN REVOLUTIONARY CAUSE").

4. AT 1457 THE FUNERAL COMMITTEE FILED ONTO THE ROSTRUM, LED BY
HUA KUO-FENG AND FOLLOWED BY WANG HUNG-WEN AND THE OTHER LEADERS IN
PROTOCOL RANK ORDER, INCLUDING POLITBURO MEMBER AND WIDOW-OF-THE
DECEASED CHIANG CHING, AGAIN DRESSED ENTIRELY IN BLACK. WANG HUNG-
WEN OPENED THE MEETING AND CALLED FOR THREE MINUTES OF SILENCE;
THROUGH THAT PERIOD A PLA BAND PLAYED
A DIRGE WHILE THE CAMERA ZOOMED IN ON A PORTRAIT OF MAO, BUT TO THE
FLAG AT HALF MAST, AND SCANNED THE MASSES BELOW. THE PERIOD OF
SILENCE ENDED WITH PLAYING OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM AND THE INTERNAT-
IONALE; THE CAMERA SETTLED ON THE FOUR POLITBURO STANDING COMMIT-
TEE MEMBERS (HUA, WANG, YEH CHIEN-YING,
AND CHANG CHUN-CHIAO) BEFORE MOVING BACK TO TAKE IN THE ENTIRE
FRONT ROW OF LEADERS, ALL STANDING AT ATTENTION. AT 1506 WANG
DELCARED THAT HUA -- INTORDUCED AS "FIRST VICE CHAIRMAN", HIS
PARTY RANK SINCE LAST APRIL 7 -- WOULD DELIVER THE MEMORIAL SPEECH.

5. IF INSTRUCTIONS TO TV CAMERAMEN ARE ANY GUIDE TO CHINA'S
POLITICAL FUTURE, A COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP IS IN PROSPECT. WHILE
HUA DELIVERED THE 21-MINUTE EULOGY FROM HIS PREPARED TEXT, THE
CAMERA FOCUSSED FOR PERHAPS TEN MINUTES ON HUA AND WANG, STAND-
ING TOGETHER BEFORE SOME 18 MICROPHONES. LEST THE MEDIA AUDIENCE --
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NEARLY ALL CHINESE NOT IN THE SQUARE GATHERED AROUND TV OR RADIO
SETS -- GET THE IMPRESSION THAT A DUUMVIRATE -- OR A TRIUMVIRATE
INCLUDING YEH CHIEN-YING -- WOULD LEAD POST-MAO CHINA,
THE CAMERA PANNED TO THE RIGHT AND LEFT OF THEM, LINGERING ON
HUA, WANG, CHANG, CHUN-CHIAO, CHIANG, AND LI HSIEN-NIEN.

6. AT 1527 HUA CONCLUDED THE EULOGY, ALL ASSEMBLED MADE THREE
RESPECTFUL BOWS OF FAREWELL TO MAO, AND THE PLA BAND PLAYED "THE

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EAST IS RED". AT PRECISELY 1530 WANG STEPPED FORWARD TO DECLARE THE MEETING ENDED. UNLIKE THE FINAL CEREMONY FOR CHOU EN-LAI, WHEN ALL LEADERS CAME FORWARD AT THE CLOSE TO CLASP THE HAND OF THE WIDOW, THE LEADERSHIP REMAINED AT ATTENTION IN THEIR PLACES AS PEKING TV WENT OFF THE AIR.

7. DURING HUA'S READING, THE ONLY OTHER SOUND WAS INTERMITTENT COUGHING FROM THE MASSES BELOW; BUT IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING, THE SOUND OF SPASMODIC WEEPING AND LEMENTING ("WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU, CHAIRMAN MAO") REVERBERATED ALONG CHAN AN STREET. WHILE THE MASSES REMAINED IN ORDERLY RANKS IN OBEDIENCE TO AN ANNOUNCEMENT MADE OVER THE LOUDSPEAKERS, FIRST AID WAS ADMINISTERED AT ROADSIDE TO THE FEW WHO HAD COLLAPSED. AT 1545 THE LOUDSPEAKERS BROADCAST PERMISSION TO DEPART AND CROWDS BEGAN TO DISPERSE SWIFTLY AND ORDERLY ACCORDING TO THE PREARRANGED PLAN. THE SQUARE, WHICH HAD FILLED OVER A PERIOD OF FOUR TO FIVE HOURS, WAS EMPTY WITHIN TWO. CHINESE WHO HAD WITNESSED THE CEREMONY ON THEIR UNIT TELEVISION SETS QUICKLY EMERGED INTO THE STREETS, A GOOD MANY YOUN-GER ONES SMILING AND BEHAVING PLAYFULLY IN SEEMING RELEASE FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF FORMAL MOURNING FOR SEVEN DAYS. SOME OF THE GROUPS RETURNING FROM THE RALLY TOOK NO CARE TO MAINTAIN RANKS ONCE THEY WERE AWAY FROM THE SQUARE. A NUMBER TOOK OFF THEIR SHIRTS.

8. BY 1230 PEKING WAS THE MOST QUIET WE HAVE EVER EXPREIENCED IT BEING IN DAYTIME; AT 1500 THE FEW PERSONS STILL MOVING ABOUT STOPPED AND OBSERVED THE THREE MINUTES SILENCE, THEIR HEADS BOWED. IN THE VICINITY OF THE PEKING RAIL STATION A TRAIN WHISTLE SOUNDED FOR THE SAME LENGTH OF TIME. VERY SOON AFTER THE CEREMONY ENDED THE NOISE LEVEL IN THE CITY WAS BACK TO NORMAL.

9. WALL-MOUNTED PHOTOGRAPHIC DISPLAYS IN THE STREETS ON THE CAREER OF CHOU EN-LAI AND ON VARIOUS OTHER SUBJECTS HAD BEEN REPLACED BY THE 11TH WITH FUNERAL DECORATIONS. ON THE MORNING OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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18TH SEVERAL OF THESE DIPLAY SPACES, STRIPPED OF FUNERAL DECORAT-IONS, CONTAINED PHOTOS OF MAO FROM THE SERIES THAT HAS BEEN APPEAR-ING IN PEOPLE'S DAILY.

10. SECURITY FOR THE OCCASION DID NOT STRIKE US AS ESPECIALLY HEAVY EXCEPT FOR CROWD AND TRAFFIC CONTROL AT THE APPROACHES TO THE SQUARE. BUT AT 0800 HOURS ONE INSTANCE WAS OBSER-VED OF UNARMED TROOPS APPARENTLY BEING SECRETED IN AN APARTMENT BLOCK IN THE NEAR-IN EASTERN SUBURBS. AT 2030 HOURS THE CORDONED-OFF AREA STILL INCLUDED THE PEKING HOTEL. GENERAL MOTOR TRAFFIC, ALONG WITH CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS, WAS STILL NOT ALLOWED TO PASS THROUGH THE AREA.
GATES

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